

Challenges are all in a days work

If variety is the spice of life, Debbie Miller's responsibilities as an HCA Human Resources Analyst provide the seasonings needed to keep each day fresh and interesting.

Debbie tried her hand as a counselor for troubled youth and as a probation officer after graduating from Cal Poly Pomona with a degree in social services. However, it took a move to Tulare County to unite Debbie with an opportunity in human resources (HR) and she's been involved in HR at the county level since the late 1970's. Debbie moved back to Southern California and joined the County of Orange in 1991, working for the Emergency Management Agency, CEO Employee Relations, the Social Services Agency and at John Wayne Airport before "landing" at the Health Care Agency in April 1996. Now, she assists Regulatory Health Services and Administrative programs with employee relations matters, considering herself a strategic partner with the programs she supports.

After starting her career in other fields, Debbie says she found HR to be suited to her interests and skills. "After receiving my degree, I knew I liked to work with people and wanted to work with adults. I like to work with individuals and try to have a positive impact on their life," stated Debbie. While the HR field

has a definite structure to it, with all of the laws, regulations and agreements that must be upheld, Debbie also finds it affords an opportunity for creative approaches to the challenges faced on a daily basis. "Each situation is different because there are different people involved. It's ever changing simply because of individuality."

While it may seem to be a bit of a contradiction, Debbie sees herself as a strong supporter of supervisors and managers as well as employees. "Supervisors and managers have a difficult job. I work with managers and supervisors to advise, consult and teach them about the questions and issues they are likely to face. This allows them to respond more readily to situations and gives them a feeling of security." In addition, Debbie recognizes that HCA employees are a valuable asset. "Lots of time goes into recruiting, hiring and training our employees and by working with employees, we help everyone to do a better job. It's also important to me that employees know what

their rights are."

In nominating Debbie for Gold Star recognition, Animal Care Services staff say that Debbie has demonstrated her ability to intercede in problems and bring

... continued on page 4



New Shelter Manager joins Animal Care Services (ACS)

HCA welcomes Dr. Cheryl Alderson, new Shelter Manager for Regulatory Health's Animal Care Services (ACS). Dr. Alderson has been a practicing veterinarian for the past 22 years, specializing in small animals, companion pets and birds. In her new position, it is her goal to help place healthy pets in loving homes.

Along with her husband who is also a veterinarian, Dr. Alderson previously owned and operated the East Valley Emergency Pet Clinic. Her other areas of interest include working with animal rescue groups, local animal shelters and pet assistance programs. With her primary focus in shelter medicine, Dr. Alderson brings an abundance of veterinary experience and expertise to her new role as Shelter Manager.



Projects that meet community needs

Assessment of community needs is a cornerstone of HCA's Mission Statement, which expresses our commitment to "protecting and promoting the optimal health of individuals, families and our diverse communities." This month, Mission in Action focuses on two of the major projects that help HCA determine the needs of the community.

The Orange County Health Needs Assessment (OCHNA) is entering its fifth year of exciting work to collect county-level data on the health of county residents and related issues, including healthcare access. HCA was instrumental in the initiation of this collaborative project and continues to provide leadership to the OCHNA Steering Committee, and funding for the program. The validity of OCHNA data was recently validated by the release of the California Health Interview Survey that showed results similar to those obtained by OCHNA.

In 2002, HCA also embarked on a mental health needs assessment for Orange County's older adults, their caregivers and professionals serving older adults. The survey helped to identify the mental health concerns of Orange County's older residents, the barriers faced in accessing mental health services and gaps in the continuum of care. Findings from this survey will be used to improve, develop and coordinate mental health services for Orange County's older adults.



Giving during the holidays

The holidays are a season for giving. In addition to the gifts given to family and friends, many HCA staffers demonstrate their generosity every year by reaching out to those in need throughout Orange County. Some employees volunteer their services at local shelters, others adopt families by providing gifts and food and some donate grocery gift certificates or visit senior citizen homes and centers. As an inspiration to those in need, Agency employees go above and beyond the call of duty to make a difference in both big and small ways. We would like to hear about some of the creative ways you have found to give precious and meaningful gifts to others who are less fortunate during the holiday season. The names submitting examples of holiday giving will be kept confidential, but the sharing of these examples will hopefully prove to be an inspiration to many. Please e-mail your examples to Tricia Arcelona at tarcelona@hca.co.orange.ca.us. Thank you for sharing and caring during the holidays and all year long!

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go,
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
—Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1850

FEBRUARY HEALTH OBSERVANCES

American Heart Month

National Children's Dental Month

Wise Health Consumer Month

National Burn Awareness Week 2-8

National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week . . 9-15

Cardiac Rehabilitation Week 10-14



New book release

Congratulations to psychologist Jonathon Rich, Ph.D., from Behavioral Health's Quality Improvement & Program Compliance office on the upcoming February release of his authored book, ***The Couple's Guide to Love and Money***. The 200-page guide is a resource intended to help couples negotiate their money "hot spots," plan a successful financial future together and explains the psychological aspects of investing.



Do you need employment verification?

One of the most common requests received by the HCA Human Resources Department is for employment verifications.

To prevent delaying the verification process, please be sure to send your requests to the appropriate office: Auditor/Controller (AC) or CEO/Human Resources (HR). **DO NOT** send your verification documents to HCA Human Resources. This will delay the process. Follow the options listed below to ensure your requests are processed in a timely manner.

LOAN VERIFICATIONS

Option 1:

- Hand carry **completed loan verification paperwork, along with a signed authorization release form** (available at your bank) to the Auditor Controller's Office. Be sure to let them know if you need the verification right away. If so, they will complete and fax the document to the lender the same

day. If it is not a rush, it will be completed within 24 hours.

Option 2:

- You may fax your loan verification document and signed authorization release form to the attention of Shirlee Lowell at (714) 796-0147. The timing information remains the same.

Option 3:

- You may mail your verification request paperwork, along with the signed authorization to release form to: OC Auditor/Controller Attn: Shirlee Lowell P.O. Box 567 Santa Ana, CA 92702-0567

Pony address:

Bldg. 12 Room 304

EMPLOYMENT & OTHER VERIFICATIONS

- Submit a signed authorization to release form (available at your bank) to CEO Human Resources (HR) who will complete and return

to you within two working days.

CEO/HR does not accept fax verifications. Call (714) 834-2856 for instructions.

By mail, please send to:

OC CEO/Human Resources
Attn: Records Office
10 Civic Center Plaza, Room 101
Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714) 834-2865

Pony address:

Bldg. 10 CEO/HR/Records

WE'RE ON-LINE!

You can check out the latest issues of the Health Care Agency's newsletters by using this URL:

<http://www.ochealthinfo.com/newsletters/>

We will keep current issues on line for a year. Let us know how you like the convenience!

New Employee Benefits Center goes live!

The New Year brings with it the convenience of the County of Orange Benefits Center website, which provides on-line access to benefits-related information for all County employees. The Benefits Center web address is www2.benefitsweb.com/countyoforange.html and you'll need to provide your Social Security Number and personal identification number (PIN).

The on-line benefits center will allow you to:

- Make benefit elections for the first time if you are a newly eligible employee or new retiree
- Review your current benefit elections if you are already enrolled
- Make changes to your benefit

elections as a result of certain life events (e.g., marriage, birth of a child)

- Model a life event to view the benefit changes allowed when you experience a particular event
- Request the forms and other materials you need to use for your County of Orange benefits
- Obtain information about your benefit plans to help you make coverage choices

- Link directly to the County of Orange benefits plan provider web sites (when available)
- Change your PIN

As the technology of the new Employee Benefits Center makes our lives easier, its success also depends on the accuracy of the information in our Human Resources database as the systems are directly linked together. HCA Human Resources in turn needs your help to make it work for you!

WHEN TO INFORM US:

1. Always keep us informed of your current mailing address.
2. Always submit any paperwork/requests effecting a change in your employment situation to your supervisor IN ADVANCE. For example, resignations, requests to change status from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) or requests for leave of absence (unless it is an unforeseeable emergency).

If you ever have any questions about a change in your employment situation that is coming up, please do not hesitate to contact our office in advance at (714) 834-3101, so we can help you in a timely manner to avoid any problems with the Benefits Center. Remember the Benefits Specialist or Website is looking directly into the HR system for your information – help us keep it accurate!

The HCA Compliance Program offers a confidential telephone hotline to voice your concerns about any situation that may conflict with Compliance Program principles. You may call the hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at:

(866) 260-5636

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

—Author Unknown

Orange County envied around the world

Question: *What does the County of Orange have besides sunshine and Disneyland that is envied around the world?*

Answer: *Smokefree indoor air.*

This October the World Health Organization (WHO) held its latest round of negotiations on a global tobacco control treaty. One of those in attendance was Andrea Portenier, a health educator in HCA's Tobacco Use Prevention Program, who participated in her role as the President of the Smokefree Air For Everyone (SAFE) Advisory Board.

The WHO estimates that every 7 seconds someone dies of a tobacco-related disease, or a total of 4.9 million deaths a year. This total is expected to grow to 10 million per year by 2020 or over 1 billion smoking related deaths during this century. Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death and disability in the developed world.

The global devastation prompted the WHO three years ago to begin work on a global tobacco control treaty. To many people, the World Health Organi-

zation may seem like a distant organization that has little practical impact on day-to-day life in Orange County. However, this will be the world's first public health treaty and it has the potential to give the world the lower smoking rates and smokefree indoor air we enjoy here in OC.

A number of international delegates were quite interested in how California obtained its smokefree law and how well it is working. It was also an opportunity to share different experiences and ideas with them about what is going on in Orange County that has resulted in the lowest adult smoking rate (at just 13%) of any major metropolitan area in the country. Since California passed Proposition 99 just over a decade ago, great strides have been made in educating the public about the harmful effects of both smoking and exposure to second hand smoke.

Gold Star

continued from page 1

a fair and equitable solution to the table. "Debbie has proven to be a just and fair person while discretely working on some difficult and emotional issues. She always manages to rise to the occasion and handles each case with professionalism, tact and compassion," her nominator stated.

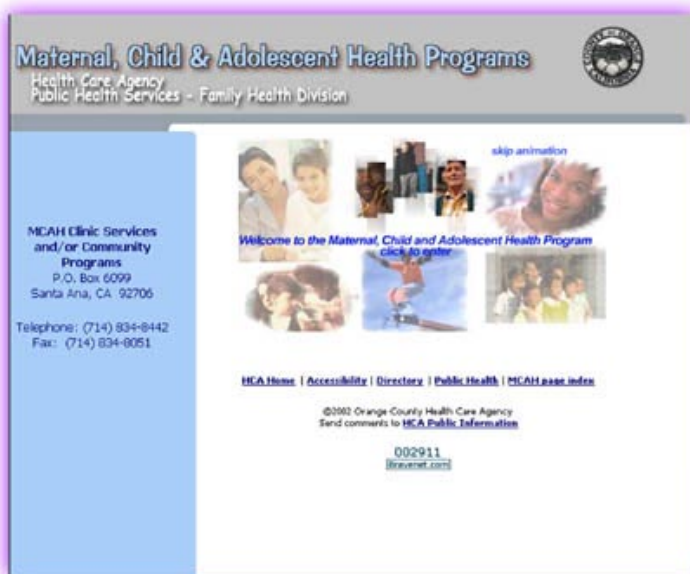
Working in HR provides many challenges, but Debbie sees the problems that come across her desk as opportunities to help people succeed and to benefit the Agency. "When investigating an issue, it's important that we get all sides of the story so that we can make a considered decision. We try to come up with a win-win solution for both the employee and supervisor involved."

Debbie enjoys learning about the many professions and occupations that make up the Health Care Agency and believes that the more she knows about someone's job, the better job she can do on their behalf. She also works hard to stay well versed on employment laws, regulations, policies and labor agreements that impact employee-employer relationships. She feels very fortunate to be part of HCA's HR team. "I really enjoy the people I work with. This is a marvelous HR team. I consider it to be the strongest team in the County. We are serious about the work we do, but we laugh and have a good time. We all share concern for employees, their supervisors and managers and the entire HCA staff."

Away from the office, Debbie enjoys spending time with family, reading, gardening and keeping up with the dozens of hummingbirds and wild birds that stop by her yard for a daily meal. Debbie's hummingbird feeders provide "seating" for 24, and she's counted as many as 20 hummingbirds feeding there at one time.

MCAH program debuts on Internet

To further reach the Orange County community, Public Health's Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health Program (MCAH) now has their own web page at www.ochealthinfo.com/mcah/. The website provides access to information about the program including the services offered at MCAH clinics, as well as linkages to other available health resources. The web page also includes information for community providers and health care professionals on topics including health education, immunizations and the Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program. For further information about the program or for a listing of MCAH clinic locations, please call the Orange County Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or visit the website online.



health care agency

WHAT'S UP

keeping staff informed & current

WHAT'S UP is a newsletter for employees of the County of Orange, CA, Health Care Agency.

Editors Tricia Arcelona
Howard Sutter
Anne Fialcowitz

Your Input

Phone . (714) 834-6644
E-mail . TArcelona@hca.co.orange.ca.us
FAX . . (714) 834-7644
Pony . . Bldg. 38-S, 4th Floor